Witness Lee Sanitized - LSM's Life-Study Radio Broadcast Examined

He came not to be Served but Serve

Join Date: May 2009

Posts: 39

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WITNESS LEE SANITIZED—

LSM's *Life-Study* Radio Broadcast Examined

Summary:

For over a decade LSM has promoted Witness Lee's *Life-study* via radio broadcasts. W. Lee was an out-spoken critic of Christianity. The Roman Catholic Church, Protestant denominations and free groups were all severely condemned. However, his denunciations were systematically censored from LSM's radio programs. Thus radio listeners hear only a sanitized version of W. Lee, not his comprehensive ministry. Basic Christian integrity requires the full disclosure of all aspects of his ministry—both the innocuous and the potentially offensive should be presented. Evidently LSM has adopted a "Bait and Switch" strategy—broadcasting

a laundered version of W. Lee's ministry to the wider Christian public in order to gain new recruits, while reserving the "real Witness Lee" for "insiders" within the Local Church movement.

Witness Lee's *Life-study of the Bible*

The *Life-study of the Bible* is W. Lee's *magnum opus*. It consists of 2,000 messages with 20,000 printed pages,1 bound into 35 green volumes. The magnitude is impressive. The publisher maintains2 "this monumental and classical work…builds upon and is a further development of all that the Lord has revealed to His church in the past centuries." Moreover,3 "No other study or exposition…conveys the life nourishment or…the divine revelation of God's holy Word…as this one does." It is comprehensive, embodying W. Lee's systematic exposition the whole Bible. This is surely W. Lee's definitive work, presenting his teachings on the Trinity, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Christian life and church-life.4

LSM's *Life-Study* Radio Broadcast

In September, 1996 Living Stream Ministry [LSM] began broadcasting excerpts of W. Lee's *Life-study* messages on the radio to acquaint the wider community with his ministry. LSM reports that5 "Radio broadcasts of *Life-study of the Bible with Witness Lee*…[are] now heard in three languages on more than 100 stations worldwide." This radio project is a substantial undertaking;6 "many thousands of man hours were put into the preparation of the *Life-study…*radio broadcasts." The expense is considerable;7 the on-going cost of LSM's UK radio program alone amounts to $15,000 US per month ($180,000 US p.a.). Here we ask—do LSM's radio programs adequately represent W. Lee's overall ministry? Do they faithfully convey all aspects of his teaching? In particular, how does LSM-radio handle controversial topics, like W. Lee's condemnation of Christianity?

W. Lee Condemns Christianity

The *Life-studies* address such topics as the Triune God and His eternal purpose, Christ and the Church,
the kingdom and the New Jerusalem. However, alongside such positive themes runs a line of condemnation. W. Lee was an out-spoken critic of Judeo-Christian religion in all its forms. He pulled no punches, denouncing8 "the three deformed religions—Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism." "In the eyes of the Lord," he asserted,9 "these three 'isms' are more evil than sin, than the world, and than our self."

W. Lee's condemnation of10 "degraded Christianity" and "satanic Judaism" spanned three decades. In the 1970s he asserted,11 "Judaism is satanic, Catholicism is demonic, and Protestantism is without Christ." In the 1980s he proclaimed,12 "The great Babylon is fallen. This is a declaration. Christianity is fallen, Christendom is fallen, Catholicism is fallen, and all the denominations are fallen. Hallelujah!"In the 1990s, his *Recovery Version* Bible's notes declared,13 "The Lord is not building His church in Christendom…composed of the apostate Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant denominations."

W. Lee based his denunciations on the Apostle John's Apocalypse. Revelation 2:9 refers to the "synagogue of Satan," hence he called Judaism "satanic." He identified the Roman Catholic Church as Jezebel, Thyatira (in Rev. 2) and as Babylon, the Great Harlot and "Mother of Harlots" in Revelation 17. Since the Protestant denominations sprang from Roman Catholicism, the "Mother of Harlots," W. Lee denigrated them as "prostitutes," the many "daughters of the Great Harlot." Christian free groups—independent congregations and house churches—did not escape his ire; they too were "Babylonian."14
W. Lee's harsh denunciations offended Christian believers. This affront was recently manifested in an "Open Letter" by over 60 Christian leaders and scholars objecting to "Witness Lee's denigrating characterizations of [Evangelical] churches and ministries."15 Clearly many believers object to his harsh condemnation of Christianity.

Issues Posed by LSM Radio

We ask—how does LSM Radio handle W. Lee's denunciations? Are his severe criticisms of the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant denominations and Christian free groups replicated in LSM's radio programs? Or has LSM censored potentially offensive remarks, so radio-listeners hear only a sanitized version of Witness Lee? This is an issue of integrity; basic Christian integrity requires that all aspects of W. Lee's ministry—both innocuous and potentially offensive—be presented. If objectionable statements are systematically expunged, this produces two versions of W. Lee's ministry—one for "outsiders," the other for "insiders." It would mean that LSM-radio's sanitized version is presented to "outsiders," the wider Christian community, while the "uncensored version, the real Witness Lee," is reserved for "insiders," members of LSM's Local Church network and those delving deeper into LSM's publications.

Witness Lee Expurgated—LSM Radio Programs

LSM radio broadcasts are edited versions of W. Lee's spoken *Life-study* messages. Particular sections were extracted. Repetition has been eliminated, mispronunciations corrected. Sentences have been omitted and individual words and phrases expunged. These tasks account for the16 "many thousands of man hours…put into the preparation of the *Life-study*…radio broadcasts." Hence what radio listeners hear is not a verbatim record of W. Lee's speaking at his Life-study trainings. It is a highly edited version of the original audio recording. Most of these editorial changes are innocuous; some are not.

Selecting certain portions for broadcast implies other *Life-study* sections are omitted. If selected portions are representative of W. Lee's ministry, over time radio listeners are exposed to all aspects of his ministry. Then LSM's radio broadcasts would be a faithful presentation of W. Lee's comprehensive ministry. If, on the other hand, certain aspects—e.g. controversial statements about Christianity—have been systematically omitted, radio listeners receive a biased (non-representative) version of W. Lee's teachings. In this case LSM's radio programs would not be a faithful presentation of his entire ministry.

We address these issues by comparing LSM radio broadcasts with the corresponding printed *Life-study* messages.17 Investigation indicates that sometimes whole messages have been omitted. These are not random messages. *Life-studies* excluded from LSM's Radio broadcasts contain themes highly offensive to Christian believers outside the Local Church. In other cases objectionable passages have been omitted, while more innocuous portions have been broadcast. Segments specifically targeting the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant denominations or free groups are often eliminated, while nebulous references to "the apostate church" are included in radio broadcasts. We document examples of LSM's selective editing of W. Lee's *Life-study* messages. We show that LSM's radio programs systematically exclude objectionable statements which appear in the printed *Life-studies*. Hence radio listeners only hear a sanitized version of W. Lee. Below we present four major examples, illustrative of this pattern.

Example One—Jezebel in the Church in Thyatira (Rev. 2:20)

The *Revelation Life-study* (Message 13) focuses on Jezebel (Rev. 2:20). W. Lee says18 "One of the crucial points in the epistle to the church in Thyatira [Rev. 2:18-29] concerns the woman Jezebel." On the radio and in print, he equates Jezebel with the women in Matthew 1319 and Revelation 17, saying,20
The sound teachers of the Bible agree that the Jezebel in Revelation 2 is

undoubtedly the woman prophesied by the Lord in Matthew 13:33. These two women actually are one. The great harlot in Revelation 17 is also the same woman. Thus, the woman in Matthew 13 is the Jezebel in Revelation 2, and Jezebel becomes the great harlot who is called the great Babylon in Revelation 17. [*Life-study of Revelation,* Message 13, printed version]

But, whom does this woman represent? On this pivotal point, LSM's radio program quotes W. Lee saying,21 "Who is this present Jezebel? According to history, no doubt the apostate church is the Jezebel, the great harlot. She brought in the hidden, the pagan things to the worship of God by His people. This is the crucial and most central point." So, Jezebel is identified as "the apostate church."That is as specific as the radio program gets. Now compare this to the printed *Life-study* message:22

When the Lord spoke to the church in Thyatira, He said that there was a present-day Jezebel. According to history, this present-day Jezebel undoubtedly is the apostate church, the Roman Catholic Church. In using the name Jezebel, the Lord was reminding us of what Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, did: she came from a heathen background and brought pagan things into the worship of God by His people. This is the crucial and most central point in the epistle to Thyatira.

Note the striking difference. On LSM radio W. Lee says, "According to history, no doubt the apostate church is the Jezebel." She is identified, generically as "the apostate church." The printed *Life-study* is more definite. It says,23 "According to history, this present-day Jezebel undoubtedly is the apostate church, *the Roman Catholic Church*." LSM's radio messages never explicitly identify Thyatira or Jezebel as the Roman Catholic Church. Significantly the term "Roman Catholic Church" is never heard in this broadcast.24 Yet, a later printed message records W. Lee saying,25 "In message 13 of this life-study I gave a strong word concerning the Roman Catholic Church." However listeners would never know this from LSM's radio program. Broadcast excerpts merely refer to the nebulous entity, "the apostate church." W. Lee's statements about Roman Catholicism were omitted, censored from the radio program.

Consider also W. Lee's statement contained in the printed message, saying that26 Jezebel teaches people to commit fornication and to eat idol sacrifices. Jezebel teaches her people to worship idols. In the Roman Catholic Church the worship of idols is taught. In Manila, I saw many people purchasing candles at the candle counter and placing them before the images and idols on the walls. Wherever there is idolatry, there is also fornication…It is not a matter of doctrinal debate—it is a matter of idolatry and fornication.

This speaking, condemning the Roman Catholic Church for idolatry and fornication has been excluded from LSM's radio program.W. Lee's condemnation of Christendom isn't heard on the radio either. In print he concludes,27

In the epistle to the church in Thyatira [Rev. 2:18-29] we see…the real situation of today's Christendom. Christendom has become an organ of Satan. Although it has the name Christ in it, actually within it there is Satan himself. We all must see this."

W. Lee's denunciation of Christendom as "an organ of Satan" appears in print, but it not heard in the Radio message; it has been expunged.

Example Two—Babylon, the Great Prostitute & Mother of Prostitutes (Rev. 17)

The Great Prostitute—the Roman Catholic Church

When he came to Revelation 17 W. Lee gave an emphatic interpretation of the great harlot, saying,28

The prostitute is the apostate Roman Catholic Church. History reveals that only one figure, one character, matches the description of the female in this chapter, and that figure is the Roman Catholic Church…According to the Scriptures, the great prostitute…is the Roman Catholic Church. If the female in Revelation 17 is not the Roman Catholic Church, then who is she? Surely, according to history, only the Roman Catholic Church fits the description of the woman given here.

This is in print. He also stated that,29 "the prostitute denotes the religious Babylon, signifying the Roman Church." Here are categorical statements in print unequivocally identifying the great prostitute as the Roman Catholic Church. How does LSM radio treat these statements? We shall see below.

Protestant Denominations—"Prostitutes" & "the Great Prostitute's Daughters"

In the printed *Life-study* W. Lee deduces that, since Babylon is called the "Mother of Prostitutes,"30

The prostitutes are the denominations and groups in Christianity with the evil doctrines, practices, and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church. Since the 'Mother of the Prostitutes' is the apostate church, the prostitutes, her daughters, must be all the different sects and groups in Christianity
who hold to some extent the teaching, practices, and traditions of the apostate Roman Church.

Later in the same message he says,31

The apostate Roman Church is a prostitute, and all her daughters are also

prostitutes. A prostitute is a woman who commits fornication for profit. Many of today's Christian groups have been formed for man's gain, empire, position, or title. This is prostitution.

According to W. Lee, this includes Protestant denominations, like the Lutherans. He argued,32

One reason for saying that the denominations and most free groups are daughters of the prostitute is the presence of idols among them. Some may argue that the Lutheran Church has no idols. But the title of this denomination, Lutheran, is itself an idol. To whom do you belong—to Christ or to Luther? Is it not sufficient to call yourself a Christian? Why must you call yourself a Lutheran? These idolatrous names are abominations.

A little later he adds,33

They are not the church because they are a prostitute, a woman who has a relationship with many men instead of a proper relationship with one husband. Who is your husband? If Christ is your husband, then why do you call yourself a Lutheran?

W. Lee denounced the Roman Catholic Church as "Babylon, the Great Harlot and Mother of Prostitutes." He then proceeded to condemnProtestant denominations (e.g. Lutherans) and "free groups" as "the Great Prostitute's daughters" and also as "prostitutes." What does LSM radio say?

LSM Radio *Life-study* of Revelation 17

How does LSM Radio's *Life-study* handle these controversial statements? *They are suppressed;* W. Lee's speaking is limited to a few sentences, lasting about 30 seconds. The sum total of his speaking on LSM's Radio about "The Great Prostitute sitting on a Scarlet Beast" is the following34

We come to the beast. The picture is a rider and a beast. The rider is a religion and the beast is a politician. The rider is this apostate church and the beast is the Roman Empire. One is the rider and the other is the carrier. [W. Lee, LSM Radio*Life-study on Revelation*, message 52]

"A very short section there," intones LSM's moderator, Chris Wilde.35 It is indeed short, just 30 seconds; that is all we hear from Witness Lee. Listeners hear him identify the "rider [as] this apostate church." They don't hear the Roman Catholic Church named. The remainder of this radio broadcast consists of dialogue between Chris Wilde and LSM's senior editor, Ron Kangas regarding incidental points. They dialogue about the apostle John being "carried away in spirit" (Rev. 17:3) and the woman being "gilded" with gold (17:4). In contrast to the radio program, W. Lee's printed message did not expound on John's being "in spirit." Moreover, only 75

words (out of 5,200)—less than 1.5%—explained “gilded.” So 98.5% of W. Lee’s message on Revelation 17 was censored from the Radio broadcast. Perhaps this program ought to be called “*Life-study of the Bible with Ron Kangas,*” rather than “*with Witness Lee.*” After all, the latter only spoke for 30 seconds out of 25 minutes; that’s 2% of the time; 98% was others’ speaking, mostly Ron Kangas. This creates the definite impression that controversial statements have been suppressed by LSM.

Example Three—Protestant Denominations Deny the Lord’s Name

The Lord praises the Church in Philadelphia for not denying His name (Rev. 3:8). On LSM radio W. Lee expounds this point, saying,36

We have only one name—the name of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is a serious matter to take a name. Suppose you are Mrs. Smith. Don’t take the name of Mrs. Jones or Mrs. Hudson. The church should have only one husband, only one name, the name of Jesus Christ. We are saved in the Lord’s name. Besides His name, we should never take any other name.George Whitefield, a contemporary of John Wesley, once declared that besides the name of Jesus Christ he would have no other name. The church in Philadelphia does not deny the Lord’s name.

Radio listeners hear W. Lee declare “It is a serious matter to take a name. Suppose you are Mrs. Smith. Don’t take the name of Mrs. Jones.”Using this analogy he discretely warns against denominating the church; yet this warning is obtuse, couched in the general terms. Listeners never hear him name names; so how many would draw the intended inference by “connecting the dots”? However, in his *Life-study* W. Lee’s speaking was direct and pointed. Immediately prior to the portion selected for radio, he says,37

Because we have an all-sufficient name, the name above every name, we do not need the names Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or any other names. We have only one name—the name of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Here he names specific denominations—Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, etc. Moreover, in writing, W. Lee decries denominations for committing “spiritual fornication.” He says,38

The reformed church…has denied the Lord’s name by denominating herself with many other names, such as Lutheran, Wesleyan, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Baptist…To denominate the church with any name other than the Lord’s is spiritual fornication.

It is difficult to avoid the impression that W. Lee’s messages were edited to avoid

offending Christians in the denominations. It is significant that, at one point in this radio broadcast, Dan Towle says,39 “This is a sensitive subject…of course we don’t want to offend people.” But this was not W. Lee’s attitude!

Example Four—Genesis *Life-studies* 34 and 54

Witness Lee’s *Life-study of Genesis* is a monumental work consisting of 120 messages. Each of the 120 *Life-study* messages was turned into one (or more) radio programs, with the notable exception of two messages.40 These two omitted messages are numbers 34 and 54. Why were these messages excluded? Was their subject matter potentially offensive? Let’s look at the content.

Denominations building Babylon, a Satanic System

The first message (#34) on Genesis 10, describes Noah’s descendents developing into nations, leading to the tower of Babel. W. Lee interprets the nations allegorically as denominations, saying,41

It is meaningful that in English the word denomination includes the word nation. In typology, it is a nation; in Christianity, it is a denomination. A denomination means that which is denominated. In typology there are the nations, such as Ethiopia, Egypt, Sheba, etc.; in Christianity there are the denominations, such as Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, etc. All of these are nations or denominations. All are divided.

The nations in Genesis 10 are interpreted as denominations because “in English the word denomination includes the word nation.” Yet Genesis was written in Hebrew. No respectable scholar would draw this inference42 based on the English words, nation and denomination! Nevertheless W. Lee says,43

This is a type of Christianity. Christianity is altogether typified by the nations…Babylon has been built by Christians who do not care for God's government but for their own kingdom…The denominational organizations have been utilized by Satan to set up his satanic system to destroy God's economy of the proper church life.

Thus Christianity and denominations are condemned, charged with building “Babylon,” a “satanic system.” In contrast, the “local church people” are portrayed in a positive light; W. Lee says,44

As the nations issued in Babel, the denominations eventually will issue in the great Babylon. These are not pleasant words to hear. But do not be troubled. When the nations became Babel, God intervened to call out Abraham…Who are today's Abraham? The church people…we are today's Abraham…Concerning denominational Christianity, we are today's Abraham who has been called out of

Babel.

Since “these are not pleasant words to hear,” LSM evidently decided they *would not* be heard by radio listeners. Hence this entire *Life-study* message (#34) was excluded from the LSM Radio program.

Free Groups—“Drunk, Drugged & Befuddled, begetting Moabites and Ammonites”

The other Genesis *Life-study* (#54) omitted by LSM radio interprets Lot’s incest with his daughters in Genesis 19. W. Lee was in his element interpreting every aspect allegorically, undeterred by the fact that Scripture never makes these applications. According to him,45 “Abraham's family and Lot's family, being God's people, were one.” However when Lot separated from Abraham,46 “division came in, it produced a free group. That ancient free group was the seed and the miniature of today's free groups. The free groups among God's people today are actually a further development of this,” he declares. Once again Abraham’s family is said to represent the Local Church, on “the proper ground.” In contrast Lot’s dysfunctional family in Sodom typifies “Christian free groups”—independent congregations, house churches and Christian fellowships. W. Lee says,47 “God's presence was with Abraham's family because his family…had the proper standing of God's testimony. Although Lot was one of God's people, he was not on the proper ground…he was in Sodom, on the ground of division and free groups.” God did not visit Sodom, only the angels; God stayed with Abraham. Based on this, W. Lee asserts, in a sweeping generalization, that free groups do not have God’s presence, saying48 “What then about the free groups? As it was with the case of Lot's family, God does not meet with them. They are His people, and He cares for them and does not forget them, but His presence is not with them.”

Lot’s drunkenness typifies Christian leaders. W. Lee alleges,49 “the leader of nearly every free group has been drugged and befuddled with some wine. Because of [this]…most of the members of their groups have been drugged.” “The leaders of many free groups today have also lost the sense of life. They are not aware of the violation of some of the governing principles ordained by God.”50 Moreover, Lot’s begetting Moab and Ammon via incest with his daughters allegedly represents51 “many so-called Christian groups. They…use worldly methods…they use incest to secure seed, they produce ‘Moabites’ and ‘Ammonites’.” “Look at today's situation,” W. Lee declares,52 “some groups use rock music, dancing, drama, movies, and games to satisfy their desire of securing the increase. In the eyes of God, this is spiritual incest…This is the way of ‘incest’ which brings forth ‘Moabites’ and ‘Ammonites’.”

“Free groups” plus their leaders and members are condemned. People brought to Christ via their gospel preaching are stigmatized as “Moabites and Ammonites,” begotten by “spiritual incest.”53 W. Lee often claimed to recognize genuine believers, while condemning their organizations.54 Yet in this case, by condemning them as “Moabites and Ammonites,” he denigrated 400 million55 genuine believers, Christians belonging to “free groups”--independent congregations, house churches and Christian fellowships. Many believers would surely find this highly offensive. LSM radio discretely avoided broadcasting this message (#54); it was “swept under the rug.” Given the subject matter is it surprising? Not if LSM radio’s purpose is to present a sanitized version of W. Lee, shorn of objectionable remarks.

Which is the Real Witness Lee?

W. Lee was an out-spoken critic of Judaism and Christianity; he condemned56 Judaism as satanic, Roman Catholicism as demonic, and “dead Protestantism” as “Christ-less.” The Church in Thyatira, Jezebel, and Babylon, the “Great Harlot” and “Mother of Prostitutes” all typified the “apostate Roman Catholic Church.” Protestant denominations also received scathing criticism; they were “prostitutes, daughters of the Great Harlot.” Christian free groups were castigated as represented by Lot’s dysfunctional family, begetting “Moabites and Ammonites via spiritual incest.” All these he denounced as “Babylonian.” W. Lee’s denigration was all-inclusive; only LSM’s Local Church movement was vindicated.57 Condemnation was a consistent theme in both W. Lee’s spoken and written ministry.

W. Lee was acutely aware that denouncing Christianity would trigger reactions, yet he testified of being compelled to minister by the “speaking Spirit.” He declared,58

We do not care for men’s arguments and opposition. The more they argue and oppose, the more our ministry is confirmed…What I say in the ministry is not my decision. It does not depend on me—it depends on the speaking Spirit.

LSM’s “blended brothers” assume they are the sole legitimate continuation of W. Lee’s ministry. Benson Phillips proclaimed59 “we declare strongly that his [Bro. Lee’s] ministry could never be over because his ministry is the New Testament ministry.”Eight years after W. Lee’s passing, another “blended brother” spoke as if W. Lee was still alive, saying60 “Today we are…cooperating with the minister of the age. We are co-workers of Witness Lee, carrying out the unique work of the one ministry.” So (allegedly) W. Lee’s ministry is not over, but is being continued by LSM’s “blended brothers.” Hence we would expect them to faithfully minister all aspects of W. Lee’s ministry (include his censure of Christianity) without any

addition, modification or omission, via all forms of media. This ought to include LSM's radio broadcasts. Yet the theme of censure has been filtered out of LSM's radio broadcasts. On LSM radio W. Lee never names names; his sharp criticisms are blunted, his admonitions diplomatic. Listeners hear W. Lee speak in vague terms about the "apostate church" and the nebulous entity of "Christendom."61 He never refers specifically to the Roman Catholic Church; he doesn't rebuke "degraded Christianity," or castigate Protestant denominations as "dead and Christ-less." Christian free groups are not maligned. This is LSM Radio's sanitized version of Witness Lee. It is a laundered version of the real W. Lee many saints heard in person and read in his published writings, including his *Life-studies*. LSM's efforts to make W. Lee's ministry palatable to the wider Christian community have produced two versions of W. Lee—the sanitized version broadcast on LSM's radio program, *Life-study of the Bible with Witness Lee* and the uncensored edition contained in W. Lee's 35-volume set of Life-studies. The "laundered Witness Lee" is heard by "outsiders," the wider Christian community on LSM radio. The unrestricted version is known by "insiders," Local Church members who attended W. Lee's "live trainings," or local "Video trainings" 1974-86 and those studying his published writings. Given the stark difference between the two versions, objective observers ask—which of the two is the real Witness Lee?

LSM's "Bait and Switch" Strategy

It appears that in order to market Witness Lee, LSM has adopted a "bait and switch" strategy. The sanitized version of W. Lee's ministry, shorn of offensive remarks, is presented to the wider Christian community via LSM's radio broadcasts. Interested listeners are then encouraged to attend follow-up meetings and *Life-study* seminars,62 where similar material is presented. This is "the bait." Ultimately new recruits are invited to join the Local Church's "prophesying meeting" and/or attend LSM's "seven annual feasts." They then hear (probably for the first time) the uncensored version of W. Lee's ministry, replete with condemnation for all sectors of "degraded Christianity."63 Some will be offended by this "other side" of W. Lee; they will feel duped. However, others will become members of LSM's Local Church.64 They will have "switched" from the expurgated to the uncensored version of Witness Lee's ministry. Such a "bait and switch" strategy is accepted in secular society; however, it is disingenuous and unbecoming among Christian believers. LSM's radio's presentation of Witness Lee falls far short of the transparency65 and full disclosure which ought to characterize every Christian work and ministry.

LSM Radio's Censorship of W. Lee "at odds with academic integrity"

Recently 60 Christian leaders and scholars issued an "Open Letter" objecting to66 "Witness Lee's denigrating characterizations of [Evangelical] churches and ministries." They called on LSM "to disavow and cease to publish" such statements. In response LSM's "blended brothers" asserted that since67 "Witness Lee…is no longer a living author…whose writings may be amended…[his] writings deserve the service of preservation and not amendment…" We ask—has LSM Radio's *Life-study* broadcast met this standard of "preservation without amendment"? By systematically expurgating W. Lee's critique of Christianity from their radio programs, hasn't LSM *de facto* amended his ministry? Have they faithfully preserved and presented *all* aspects of W. Lee's ministry on radio? Do the "blended brothers" really believe W. Lee's testimony that68 "What I say in the ministry is not my decision…it depends on the speaking Spirit"? If they do, why were potentially offensive statements censored on the radio?Isn't this "playing politics"?

LSM's "blended brothers" reject the 60 scholars' call to disavow W. Lee's condemnation of Christianity, as unjustified "censorship." They assert that69 "we find such a call for the…censorship of particular statements of Witness Lee…at odds with academic integrity." Censorship, they say, violates integrity. Yet has not LSM practiced exactly this kind of censorship—eliminating offensive statements—on a grand scale when they transformed W. Lee's *Life-study* messages into radio broadcasts? LSM's "blended brothers" assert that censorship violates integrity. But aren't these words of response contradicted by LSM's actions? By censoring the *Life-studies* for radio broadcast doesn't LSM stand self-condemned?

Nigel Tomes,

Toronto, CANADA
November, 2009

NOTES

Thanks are extended to those who commented on earlier drafts of this piece. As usual the author accepts full responsibility for the contents. The views expressed here are solely the author's and should *not* be attributed to any believers, elders, co-workers or churches with whom/which he is associated. This article refers to W.

Lee's controversial criticisms of Christianity. The central issue addressed here is whether LSM's radio program has faithfully presented this aspect of W. Lee's ministry to the wider Christian public. It is *not* the purpose of this article to critique W. Lee's denunciations of Christianity. The author's personal views on the latter issue are in agreement with the Great Lakes Area brothers' response [February, 2007] to the "Open Letter" by 60 Christian leaders & scholars, which he endorsed. In part that GLA brothers' response stated: "We confess that on occasion our past attitude toward other believers has been improper. We sincerely apologize to our brothers and sisters whom we have offended. Rather than condemning the Christian associations within which our fellow-believers serve the Lord, we wish to belatedly express our appreciation for their efforts to bring the gospel to the world… Rather than malign others, we desire to humbly examine ourselves before the Lord, asking: Are we guilty of unscriptural teachings and practices?"

1.The exact count is 2,226 messages with 21,219 pages.This count also includes W. Lee's "*Conclusion of the New Testament*" messages.
2.Quote from LSM's President, Benson Phillips, April 1986, www.livingstream.com/life-study.html. The complete quote reads: "This monumental and classical work by our brother builds upon and is a further development of all that the Lord has revealed to His church in the past centuries."
3.Quotes from LSM's President, Benson Phillips, April 1986, www.livingstream.com/life-study.html. The complete quote reads: "No other study or exposition of the New Testament conveys the life nourishment or ushers the reader into the divine revelation of God's holy Word according to His New Testament economy as this one does."
4.LSM's *Recovery Version of the Bible* (with footnotes by W. Lee) also encapsulates W. Lee's teachings. Most of the *Life-study* New Testament footnotes are incorporated into the printed *Life-study* messages. In the case of the *Recovery Version* Old Testament, the footnotes were derived from the published *Life-study* volumes.
5.Quote from the LSM website www.lsmradio.com
6.Quote from "*Fellowship Concerning the Radio Broadcast in the United Kingdom*,"Oct. 15, 2009 posted on www.LastAdam.com
7."*Fellowship Concerning the Radio Broadcast in the United Kingdom*," October 15, 2009 posted on www.LastAdam.com. This Letter concerning LSM's UK Radio broadcast says (in part) "On September 21, 2009, Premier Radio began to broadcast their programs, including *Life-study of the Bible*, not just in London but throughout the United Kingdom. This means that *Life-study of the Bible* can now

be heard at the convenient time of 8:00 pm, Mon. through Friday, in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland…We would like to bring the matter of the cost of the radio broadcast to the saints in the Lord's recovery for fellowship. The monthly cost to reach more than 60 million potential listeners is approximately 15,000 US dollars."

8.W. Lee, *The Satanic Chaos in the Old Creation and the Divine Economy for the New Creation*, chp. 4 (Messages given by W. Lee in Irving, Texas, May 23-25, 1992)

9.W. Lee, *The Satanic Chaos in the Old Creation and the Divine Economy for the New Creation*, chp. 4 (Messages given by W. Lee in Irving, Texas, May 23-25, 1992)

10.W. Lee's use of the term "degraded Christianity" is exemplified in the NT *Recovery Version*. In his note on Rev. 2:26 (RcV., note 3) W. Lee says, "those who do not answer His [the Lord's] call to overcome degraded Christianity will not participate in the reign of the millennial kingdom." (Also reproduced in the *Life-study of Revelation*, p. 166) He also refers to "apostate Catholicism and degraded Protestantism" (RcV. Rev. 3:7, note 1); "The deviation from the word to heresies and the exalting of many names other than that of Christ are the most striking signs of degraded Christianity." (RcV. Rev. 3:8, note 3)

11.W. Lee, *The Stream* Magazine, vol. 14, no. 4 (November 1976) p. 12

12.W. Lee, *The Seven Spirits for the Local Churches* (Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1989), p. 97

13.W. Lee in *The New Testament Recovery Version*, (Matthew 16:18, note 4) (Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1991), p. 99. This note, in its entirety reads: "The Lord's building of His church began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 41-42). Yet the Lord's prophecy here still has not been fulfilled, even up to the twentieth century. The Lord is not building His church in Christendom, which is composed of the apostate Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant denominations. This prophecy is being fulfilled through the Lord's recovery, in which the building of the genuine church is being accomplished." (emphasis added) W. Lee also declared in 1995 (two years before passing away) "Christianity today is stranded on the sands of superstition, superficiality, and lukewarm theology." (W. Lee, *The Triune God's Revelation and His Move,* pp. 97-99 messages given by W. Lee in Anaheim, California, August 23 through December 13, 1995.)

14.For example, W. Lee asserts that "To call yourself by a denominational name, such as Lutheran, Methodist, or Episcopalian—that is Babylonian. All denominational names are Babylonian factors of division and confusion [p. 588] …Anything divisive causes confusion, and confusion denotes Babylonianism. Today there are hundreds of free groups; they are everywhere. But what they are

practicing is divisive and confusing; hence, it is Babylonian." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, Message 51, pp 588-9, emphasis added]

15."An Open Letter" from over 60 Evangelical Christian Scholars, Jan. 9, 2007 [www.openletter.org.] The Letter "asks the 'local churches' and Living Stream [LSM] to renounce statements made by Lee that denigrate evangelical Christian denominations and organizations." *Christianity Today* reported that W. "Lee was also very critical of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, raising concerns that the local churches regarded themselves as the only legitimate Christians. His statements prompted 60 evangelical leaders (including Darrell Bock of Dallas Theological Seminary and Paige Patterson of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) to publish an open letter in January 2007 asking the local churches and their publishing service, Living Stream Ministry (LSM), to disavow Lee's doctrinal statements and criticism of evangelicals." Collin Hansen, "Cult Watchers Reconsider: Former detractors of Nee and Lee now endorse 'local churches'." In *Christianity Today*, January (Web-only), 2009 posted 1/26/2009 09:58AM

16."*Fellowship Concerning the Radio Broadcast in the United Kingdom*,"October 15, 2009 posted on www.LastAdam.com. Observations in this paragraph are based upon conversations with participants in the editing process at LSM Radio.

17.The published *Life-study* messages are edited versions of Witness Lee's spoken messages delivered at successive *Life-study* trainings. His spoken messages were edited into written form and augmented (at times) by incorporating footnotes from the Recovery Version. On occasion W. Lee's Recovery Version footnotes were read during his sharing. As a required component of the Life-study trainings, trainees reviewed W. Lee's spoken messages, along with the Recovery Version footnotes, to prepare for "testing"—a team review (by locality or area) of a previous message. Here we use W. Lee's published *Life-study* messages as the "benchmark" against which to evaluate LSM's Radio version of the same message. The published *Life-study* messages are more accessible than the audio or video tapes of the original *Life-study* trainings.

18.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 13, p. 156

19.Concerning the woman in Matthew 13, the relevant verse says—"The kingdom of the heavens is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened." (Matt. 13:33) Expounding this, W. Lee is quoted saying, "The Catholic Church has fully leavened in a hidden way all the teachings concerning Christ. This is the actual situation in the Roman Catholic Church." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Matthew* message 38, p. 467, emphasis added] In this context, he also condemns Christendom, in general and the Catholic charismatic movement, in particular, saying, "This is today's Christendom. Without exception, everything in Christendom is a mixture. Consider the charismatic

movement which has been brought into Catholicism and even mixed with the worship of Mary. Many Catholic charismatics think they are spiritual, yet they still worship Mary. The Roman Catholic Church also has what is called charismatic masses." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Matthew* message 38, p. 468.] W. Lee also denounces Protestant denominations, saying, "Not only the Catholic Church has taken in leaven, but the Protestant denominations and groups have also." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Matthew* message 38, p. 469.] Both the YMCA and mixing sports with preaching are condemned, because W Lee, "knew of some young men in a certain organization who mixed basketball with the preaching of the gospel. Using basketball for gospel preaching is also leaven. I doubt that very many were saved through this. The whole principle of the Y.M.C.A. is leaven, for the goal of the Y.M.C.A. is to bring the heavenly standard down to the earthly level, to bring the gospel to secular society in a worldly way." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Matthew* message 38, p. 469.]

20.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 13, p. 157

21.LSM Radio *Revelation Life-study*, message 13 at 7 min.

22.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 13, p. 157, emphasis added

23.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, p. 157, emphasis added

24.In contrast to the reluctance exhibited in their Radio program, LSM's *Recovery Version New Testament* explicitly identifies Thyatira and Jezebel with the Roman Catholic Church, saying, "the church in Thyatira prefigures the Roman Catholic Church, which was fully formed as the apostate church by the establishing of the universal papal system…" (RcV., Rev. 2:18, note 1) "the apostate Roman Catholic Church, which is signified by the degraded church in Thyatira" (RcV, Rev. 3:1, note 1) and also "the Lord used Jezebel as a type, indicating that the apostate Roman Catholic Church is a self-appointed prophetess, one who presumes to be authorized by God to speak for God." (RcV. Rev. 2:20, note 2)]

25. W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, p. 584

26.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 13, p. 160, emphasis added

27.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 13, p. 163, emphasis added

28.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 51, p. 584, emphasis added

29.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 51, p. 598. The Recovery Version footnotes make the same identification. A note on Rev. 14:8 says, "Babylon here is the religious, mysterious Babylon, which is the Roman Catholic Church, as in [Rev.] 17:2-6…" (RcV., Rev. 14:8, note 1) A note on Rev. 17:1 says "*Harlot* here refers to the apostate Roman Catholic Church." (RcV, Rev. 17:1, note 3)

30.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 51, p. 590, emphasis added. Along the same lines, W. Lee also said "the daughters of the great prostitute are the Christian groups that hold the doctrines, practices, and traditions of the Roman

Catholic Church. If a group holds any one of these things, that group is a daughter of the Roman Church." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 51, p. 591] He also states, "The prostitutes are the denominations and groups in Christianity with the evil doctrines, practices, and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church."] Hence, "To have a Christmas tree in your home is to practice something of the great prostitute." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, p. 591]Applying this criterion, he says, "Probably you cannot find one Christian group that has not been influenced by the prostitute. Perhaps only in the local churchescan you find…nothing of the prostitute," W. Lee concluded. [W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, p. 591]

31.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 51, p. 594, emphasis added

32.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 51, p. 592, emphasis added

33.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 51, p. 594, emphasis added

34.LSM Radio *Life-study on Revelation*, message 52, beginning at 7 min. 15 sec.

35.LSM Radio's publication, *The Hearing of Faith*, refers to Chris Wilde as "the host of *Life-study of the Bible with Witness Lee."* Chris Wilde fulfills a public relations and media spokesman's role at LSM. The *Christianity Today* article referenced above [January (Web-only), 2009 posted 1/26/2009 09:58AM] quotes "LSM spokesman Chris Wilde."

36.LSM Radio *Life-study of Revelation*, message 15 at 13 min. 20 sec to 14 min. 35 sec. This corresponds to the printed *Life-study of Revelation*, message 15, pp. 188-9. The radio message differs from the printed *Life-study* (which has largely been reproduced in the text). Besides insignificant differences, the printed *Life-study* says "Suppose you are Mrs. Smith. If you take the name of Mrs. Jones, it indicates that you have committed fornication." (W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 15, p. 188, emphasis indicates portion omitted from the radio broadcast) In a later message (#51) W. Lee again uses the illustration of "Mrs. Smith," saying, "They are not the church because they are a prostitute, a woman who has a relationship with many men instead of a proper relationship with one husband. Who is your husband? If Christ is your husband, then why do you call yourself a Lutheran? If your name is truly Mrs. Smith, then why do you call yourself Mrs. Jones one day and Mrs. Harris another?" [W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 51, p. 594, emphasis added] Concerning George Whitefield, the printed Life-study says, "George Whitefield, a contemporary of John Wesley, once declared that besides the name of Jesus Christ he would have no other name. Although Whitefield was an Englishman, he renounced the name of the Church of England, not belonging to that name anymore." (W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 15, p. 189 emphasis indicates portion omitted from the radio broadcast) This raises the question—were these portions excluded from the radio program because they

might offend some listeners?
37.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 15, p. 188
38.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 15, p. 187, also RcV. Rev. 3:8, note 3
39.LSM Radio *Life-study of Revelation*, message 15 at 17 min. 5 sec.
40.See: http://www.lsmradio.com/audio/genesis.html
41.W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 34, p. 457
42.The English word “denominate” derives from the Latin dēnōmināre, dēnōmināt-: dē-, *de-* + nōmināre, *to name* (from nōmen, nōmin-, *name*). The English word “nation” derives from Latin nātiōn- (s. of nātiō) birth, tribe, equiv. to nāt(us) (ptp. of nāscī *to be born*) + -iōn. The former is [IMG]file:///C:/DOCUME%7E1/CS/LOCALS%7E1/Temp/msohtml1/01/clip_image002.gif[/IMG]related to the verb—“to name,” the latter to the verb—“to be born.” It is mere coincidence that the word, “denomination,” contains as its last six letters—“nation.”
43.W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 34, p. 464
44.W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 34, p. 465, emphasis added
45.W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, p. 716
46.W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, p. 716
47.W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, p. 717
48.W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, p. 717, emphasis added. W. Lee also declares, “Be honest and fair about the free groups. Is there the testimony of God among them? No, God is not expressed in the free groups. They do whatever they like, and there is no witness or testimony with them. Lot's family became such a free group…” [W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, p. 718, emphasis added] Note that this is also a categorical statement which is applied by W. Lee to all “free groups.”
49.W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, p. 720. The quote in context reads: “If you examine today's situation, you will find that the leader of nearly every free group has been drugged and befuddled with some wine. A proper leader must be sober. Lot should have said to the daughter who came to him with wine, ‘What are you doing? Throw that away.’ But Lot was not a sober person; he drank, and he even drank without self-control. He became drunk to such an extent that his daughters laid with him and he had no awareness of it. Most of the leaders of the free groups, being drunk with some wine, say, do, and decide things in a befuddled way. Because of the befuddled condition of so many leaders, most of the members of their groups have been drugged. After Lot became drunk, he slumbered and slept. The same condition prevails among the free groups today. Concerning the testimony of God, the leaders are slumbering and sleeping.”
50.W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, p. 721

51.W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, p. 721 The quote in context reads: “They turned to incest, using such a sinful thing to replace the lost function of life. This is also the situation among many so-called Christian groups. They have lost the function of the Body of Christ, the proper function of life, and use worldly methods to fill the gap. Like Lot's group, they cannot produce the proper "Isaac" for the fulfilling of God's purpose. Because they use incest to secure seed, they produce ‘Moabites’ and ‘Ammonites’.” [W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, p. 721] W. Lee also says, “We have seen that the leader was drugged and befuddled and that the function of life was lost. But the daughters, the members of this free group, still wanted to bear fruit and have the increase. Although they had neither the proper leadership nor the function of life, they had an evil way of acquiring the seed. The same is true among many free groups today.” [W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, p. 721] Moreover, he states that, “Some free groups today have also been drugged with the wicked current of the evil world and only care for success, not for the means. They need the de-drugging of God's sobering word.” [W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, p. 722]
52. W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, p. 721 W. Lee also said, “Today's situation is absolutely the same. Many free groups only care for the continuation of their kin, that is, of their group. They do not care for God's will nor for the proper way, but bring forth seed by incestuous activities.” [W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, pp. 723-4] Elsewhere W. Lee said, “Those who use rock music and other gimmicks in their gospel preaching may bring some people to the Lord by these means, but all such will be Moabites. [W. Lee, *The World Situation and God's Move*, p. 37, emphasis added] He also criticized the meetings of Charismatic believers, asserting, “In charismatic meetings, they sometimes use rock music, dramas, and all kinds of performances to attract people. These are all gimmicks. The use of these gimmicks shows that the power of the Spirit is lacking. [W. Lee, *Preaching the Gospel on the College Campuses*, p. 12]
53.For example, W. Lee says, “Lot's family had lost its function in life, it had improper members—the daughters…Many Christian groups today also have such improper members. They, like Lot's daughters, desire to have the seed but do not care for the proper means. They may say, ‘Let us go to win souls,’ but they win souls through the way of spiritual incest.” [W. Lee, *Life-study of Genesis*, message 54, p. 714, emphasis added]
54.Consider for example his statement, “In every denomination, including the Roman Catholic Church, there are real, saved Christians. They are God’s people belonging to the Lord. But the organization of the denominations in which they are is not of God. The denominational organizations have been utilized by Satan to set up his satanic system to destroy God’s economy of the proper church life.”Witness

Lee, *Life-Study of Genesis,* Message 34, Vol. 1, p. 464. (Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1987)

55.“According to David B. Barrett…about one-fifth of the world’s two billion believers [i.e. 400 million believers] are ‘independent,’ that is, not associated with the churches, denominations and traditions that have long been equated with the essence of Christianity itself.” [Prof. Mark A. Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity*, p. 25] Barrett’s data are for the year 2000.

56.Take, for example, W. Lee’s statement that “Judaism is Satanic, Catholicism is demonic, and Protestantism is without Christ. They teach Christ’s name, but He is not there. Do you really believe that today the living Lord Jesus is in the Protestant churches? Whether you believe it or not, the Lord says that He is outside the door.” (W. Lee, *The Stream Magazine*, vol. 14, no. 4 (November 1976) p. 12, emphasis added) As another example, consider the following, “Religion always utilizes politics to damage the church. Religion has no power to cause physical damage to the Lord’s lovers, but it does use politics and the government to damage the church. Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, as well as Judaism,all fall into this category, becomingan organization of Satan as his toolto damage God’s economy.” [W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, Message 11, p. 133, RcV footnote Rev. 2:9, note 5, emphasis added] On the matter of Protestantism being “dead,” consider the following quotes: “Many have considered the reformed Protestant Church to be living, but the Lord says that she is dead.” [RcV., Rev. 3:1, note 3]; “Since the reformed Protestant churches are dead, they will be unaware of the Lord's coming as a thief.” [RcV., Rev. 3:3, note 1] and “To overcome here is to overcome the deadness of the Protestant churches, i.e., to overcome dead Protestantism.” [RcV., Rev. 3:5, note 1]

57.As examples of vindicating the LSM’s Local Church, consider the following quotes. W. Lee says, “the daughters of the great prostitute are the Christian groups that hold the doctrines, practices, and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church. If a group holds any one of these things, that group is a daughter of the Roman Church.” (W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, p. 591.) In this context he asserts that “Probably you cannot find one Christian group that has not been influenced by the prostitute. Perhaps only in the local churchescan you find…nothing of the prostitute.” [W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, p. 591, emphasis added] As a further example, consider “The Lord is not building His church in Christendom, which is composed of the apostate Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant denominations. This prophecy is being fulfilled through the Lord’s recovery, in which the building of the genuine church is being accomplished.” [W. Lee in *The New Testament Recovery Version*, Matthew 16:18, note 4, (Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1991), p. 99]

58.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 51, p. 588 The quote in context reads, “We are not dealing with an insignificant matter, but with a matter that is very crucial for the coming age. We do not care for men’s arguments and opposition. The more they argue and oppose, the more our ministry is confirmed. Many times, after saying something uncomplimentary about Christianity in a message, I wondered why I was so strong, and I resolved to be a little softer. Nevertheless, what I say in the ministry is not my decision. It does not depend on me—it depends on the speaking Spirit. If in my ministry I do not speak boldly regarding Christianity, I have no peace, and I lose the anointing. If I fail to do this, my ministry will be weakened. When I do speak out, the opposition is aroused. But I am confirmed even by the opposition. The deeds and reactions of the opposers fully expose them. I am burdened that we would be enlightened, see through all the veils, and enter into the inner chamber to perceive the reality of today’s situation in Christianity.” [W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 51, p. 588, emphasis added—indicating portion quoted in the main text.] This statement was made in the context of condemning Christianity. Immediately after, W. Lee says, “It is not a matter of the doctrine of the Trinity or of the teaching concerning the local church. It is absolutely a matter of Babylon. To call a pastor “reverend”—that is Babylonian. To set up a Christmas tree and to honor Santa Claus— that is Babylonian. To call yourself by a denominational name, such as Lutheran, Methodist, or Episcopalian—that is Babylonian. All denominational names are Babylonian factors of division and confusion.” [W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 51, p. 588]

59.Benson Phillips, *Ministry Magazine*, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 275, Jan. 2006. This view is diametrically opposed to the biblical principle that “David served his own generation, and slept” (Acts 13:36) as expounded by W. Nee when he wrote, “David ‘served his own generation, and slept’ (Acts 13:36). He could not serve two! Where today we seek to perpetuate our work by setting up an organization or society or system, the OT saints served their own day and passed on. This is an important principle of life. Wheat is sown, grows, ears, is reaped, and then the whole plant, even to the root, is plowed out. That is the Church, never rooted permanently in the earth. God’s work is spiritual to the point of having no earthly roots, no smell of earth on it at all. Men pass on, but the Lord remains. The spiritual testimony of believers is to be heavenly, not earthly. Everything to do with the Church must be up-to-date and living, meeting the present—one might even say the passing—needs of the hour. Never must it become fixed, static. God Himself takes away His workers, but He gives others. Our work suffers, but His never does. Nothing touches Him. He is still God.” [W. Nee, *What Shall This Man Do?* Collected Works, vol. 40, pp. 84-5]

60.DT, Spoken April, 2005, *The Ministry*, Vol. 9, No. 6, June 2005, p. 142 Note that when brother "DT" (Dick Taylor or Dan Towle?) spoke this word, in 2005, W. Lee had been deceased for 8-years. Yet brother "DT" said "Today [i.e. in 2005] we **are** (present tense)…cooperating with the minister of the age. We **are** (present tense) co-workers of Witness Lee." (Emphasis added). This raises the question, how can a worker today co-work with another brother (W. Lee, W. Nee or any other brother) who is already deceased? The quote in context reads: "Today we are under the ministry of the age, cooperating with the minister of the age. We are co-workers of Witness Lee, carrying out the unique work of the one ministry, building up the corporate Christ." [DT, Spoken April, 2005, *The Ministry*, Vol. 9, No. 6, June 2005, p. 142]

61.The term "Christendom" is nebulous because it assumes a variety of meanings. [1] "In a cultural sense it refers to the worldwide community of Christians, adherents of Christianity. This community numbers in the billions of people of the world population. This community is spread across many different nations and ethnic groups connected only by faith in Christ and observance of the Bible." [2] "In a historical or geopolitical sense the term usually refers collectively to Christian majority countries or countries in which Christianity dominates or was a territorial phenomenon." [Wikipedia] In the latter sense [2] "Christianity" is territorial, composed of "Christian [or post-Christian] countries or nations." LSM Radio also quotes W. Lee condemning Christendom in reference to the Parable of the Great Tree in Matt. 13 which says, "The kingdom…is like a mustard seed, which a man…sowed in his field, And which is smaller than all the seeds; but when it has grown, it…becomes a tree, so that the birds of heaven come and roost in its branches." (13:31-32, RcV.) LSM Radio relates this to Christendom, saying "Today's Christendom is huge and devilishly abnormal. It is not only a tree, but a great tree. By this we see that not only the nature of the constituent of the kingdom has been changed, but that the size of the kingdom has become abnormal (p. 464)…In today's Christendom, there are many evil persons, evil things, and evil matters. Christendom has become a big tree producing no fruit, but having become a lodging place for so many evil things." (p. 465) [LSM Radio Life-study of Matthew, message 39; We quote the corresponding statements in the printed *Life-study of Matthew*, message 38, pp. 464-5] Note that, in the radio message, W. Lee identifies "Christendom" with the "great tree" harboring "birds" (evil persons & things). But LSM's radio broadcast is omits W. Lee's reference to the Roman Catholic Vatican and denominations. In the printed *Life-study* W. Lee says, "In the Vatican we see the fulfillment of this parable.The Vatican is even an independent country…This is a further indication that the Christian religion has become a big tree. Today there are approximately 800 million Catholics…under the authority of

the pope… under the papal system…If you visit the Vatican you will see that it is a huge tree, a lodging place filled with so many birds. The same thing is found in the Catholic churches in the United States and in the large denominations. In the Catholic Church and in the denominations it is difficult to find a grain of wheat or a mustard seed. Instead of food, there is lodging for the birds. This is today's situation."[W. Lee, *Life-study of Matthew*, message 38, pp. 465-6, emphasis added] W. Lee's direct application of this parable, condemning both the Roman Catholic Vatican and "large denominations," has been omitted from LSM's radio broadcast.

62.LSM's appeal for funds to finance its UK radio broadcast says, "In the past two years, as a result of the radio broadcast and the free mass distribution of the ministry publications, more than 10,000 seekers of the Lord have contacted us…We hope to have personal visits with the most promising respondents in most of the key cities before the end of the year and arrange follow-up meetings and seminars in the spring." [Quote from "*Fellowship Concerning the Radio Broadcast in the United Kingdom*,"October 15, 2009 posted on www.LastAdam.com, emphasis added.]

63.LSM's "blended brothers" continue to condemn "Christianity" at LSM's "seven annual feasts" and in LSM's publications and websites. Consider from example the following quotes: "we stand outside of and apart from the degraded system of Christianity, which is filled with unscriptural teachings and practices." *"An Appeal to the Young People in the Lord's Recovery,"* AFaithfulWord.org (July 10, 2006). "There are Christians working throughout this whole earth. I would like to say boldly that they are not working the work of God because they are not laboring in the same stream that we are laboring in.…We recognize that other Christians are working, but they are not working the work of God." [LSM-presidentBP, *The Ministry*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Feb. 2005, p. 106] "Christianity today, the reality of Babylon…" [LSM-president, BP *The Ministry*, vol. 8, No. 2, Feb., 2004, p. 127] "The entire situation—not a part of it, not a majority of it, but the entire situation—of today's Christianity is in degradation." [BL (Bill Lawson) *The Ministry*, vol. 8, No. 2, Feb., 2004, p. 58] "Today's Christianity has many 'houses of Micah'; the Roman Catholic Church, the state churches, the denominations, and many independent groups are 'houses of Micah,' full of idols as replacements of Christ. This is apostasy. The main replacement of Christ may be the person of a Christian leader himself." [RK, *The Ministry*, vol. 8, No. 6, June 2004, p. 15] "We should not bring anything of Christianity into the Lord's recovery. We only take the faith. If some in Christianity are in the faith, then we accept them, but we accept nothing of Christianity.' [LSM-president BP, *The Ministry*, Vol. 9, No. 3, March. 2005, p. 121]

64.LSM attributes the increased membership in the "Church in London (UK)" mainly to the success of its UK radio program. LSM's appeal for funds to finance

its UK radio broadcast says “In the year 2000 Premier Radio in London began to broadcast the *Life-study of the Bible* in the London area. At that time there were fewer than 100 saints in the church in London. Today, after almost ten years, the number of saints in London has grown to more than 500, and the number of districts has increased to 10…**Most of the new saints were gained through the impact of the radio broadcast**.” [Quote from “*Fellowship Concerning the Radio Broadcast in the United Kingdom*,”Oct. 15, 2009 posted on www.LastAdam.com, emphasis added.]

65.Transparency characterizes the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1) W. Lee’s note says, “The water of life is bright as crystal, having no dimness or opaqueness. When this water of life flows in us, it purifies us and makes us as transparent as crystal.” [W. Lee, RcV. Rev. 22:1, note 4]

66.“An Open Letter” from over 60 Evangelical Christian Scholars, Jan. 9, 2007 [www.openletter.org.]

67.“A Longer Response to ‘An Open Letter to the Leadership of Living Stream Ministry and the Local Churches’,” December 7, 2008p. 41 www.lctestimony.org/LongerResponse.html#denomitations The quote in context reads: “Witness Lee went to be with the Lord on June 9, 1997, and now belongs to the ages. He is no longer a living author whose views can be changed and whose writings may be amended. From henceforth Witness Lee’s[his] writings deserve the service of preservation and not amendment so that the current and future generations may be able to assess them for what they really are.” (emphasis added—indicating the abbreviated quote used in the main text)

68.W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, message 51, p. 588. This statement was made in the context of condemning Christianity. Immediately after, W. Lee says, “It is not a matter of the doctrine of the Trinity or of the teaching concerning the local church. It is absolutely a matter of Babylon. To call a pastor “reverend”—that is Babylonian. To set up a Christmas tree and to honor Santa Claus— that is Babylonian. To call yourself by a denominational name, such as Lutheran, Methodist, or Episcopalian—that is Babylonian. All denominational names are Babylonian factors of division and confusion.” [W. Lee, *Life-study of Revelation*, # 51, p. 588]

69.“A Longer Response to ‘An Open Letter to the Leadership of Living Stream Ministry and the Local Churches’,” December 7, 2008p. 41 www.lctestimony.org/LongerResponse.html#denomitationsThe quote in context reads: “No properly trained scholar today would advocate the disavowal and censorship of portions of the writings of Augustine or of Luther or even of the greatest heresiarchs. Hence, we find such a call for the disavowal and censorship of particular statements of Witness Lee quite peculiar and strangelyat odds with

academic integrity.” (emphasis added—indicating the abbreviated quote used in the main text)

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